



Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Coeur d'Alene Public Meeting
June 22, 2011
North Idaho College, Meyers Health and Sciences Building, Room 106
7 pm

Chairman Frasure brought the meeting to order, and asked the commissioners to introduce themselves as follows: **Commissioner George Moses** from Boise, **Commissioner Julie Kane** from Lapwai, **Commissioner Allen Andersen** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Evan Frasure** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Lorna Finman** from north Idaho, and **Commissioner Lou Esposito** from Boise. Also present from the staff were **Kristin Ford** and **Cyd Gaudet**. Chairman Frasure acknowledged the presence of former Commissioner Dean Haagenson at the meeting.

Commissioner Kane then explained the guidelines that the commission has to follow. She explained that the purpose of the commission is to redraw the district lines every 10 years, after the census, so the one person=one vote concept is kept intact. She also advised the audience that Idaho has grown 22 % in the last 10 years, mostly in the urban areas. **Commissioner Kane** explained that Idaho Statutes indicate that the commission can create 30 to 35 districts, each with a variation of up to 10%, and that they must preserve traditional neighborhoods and communities of interest. She also advised that they should avoid drawing oddly shaped districts, avoid dividing counties, and if counties are divided they need to be joined with adjacent counties and a highway must connect them. The commission must also protect precinct lines, and the commissioners cannot consider incumbents or their respective parties.

Chairman Frasure then advised the group that once a decision is made it will be filed with the Secretary of State and becomes law for 10 years, with no review by the legislature or the governor. He explained that the commission must also reapportion the congressional districts, and that due to growth they must move 58,000 people from the first district to the second. He also explained the website where the public can draw maps, and encouraged them to submit plans online. He explained that you don't have to draw the entire state; you can just do a region. **Commissioner Moses** informed the room that Idaho has the most publicly-accessible redistricting process in the country and that the public can use the same program that the commissioners use to draw maps. He then challenged the audience to create at least 7 districts using the same rules as the commission must use.

Chairman Frasure then emphasized that the commission must have a super majority to split a precinct, and they are not going to be a glorified county clerk and redraw precincts. Also, any roads connecting a district have to be state or federal roads. These requirements were passed by the legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Chairman Frasure then called **John Bruning**, a City Council Member representing Coeur d'Alene, to testify. He stated that keeping Coeur d'Alene whole is sensible and their population at 44,137 is just nearly at the target population goal of 45,788. He advised the commission that it is vital to keep cities whole to preserve traditional neighborhoods and communities of interest. He listed cities around the state which had been kept whole by the last redistricting commission. In answer to a question by **Commissioner Andersen**, **Mr. Bruning** suggested that he believes the commission must maintain the integrity of city boundaries even though cities grow and the boundaries change.

Commissioner Andersen asked if there are any geographic landmarks or highways or waterways that the commission can use as boundaries that wouldn't change yet would still keep the city whole? **Mr. Bruning** suggested that on the east side there is a national forest,

south there is Lake Coeur d'Alene, and on the west is the City of Post Falls, so they are pretty well surrounded and are not going to grow much geographically. He also noted that to the north they are up against the cities of Hayden and Dalton. **Chairman Frasure** then discussed how city boundaries are not always contiguous, with islands of county areas within a city, and how county clerks around the state have asked the commission not to follow city boundaries as they constantly change. He added that many clerks have asked the commission to use major streets or geographic areas to draw their district lines. He then asked **Mr. Bruning** if he would suggest that the commission honor their city boundaries and split many of their precincts, and if so how this would be better for their voters. Honoring the precinct lines around Coeur d'Alene would bring the population up over 50,000. **Mr. Bruning** indicated that they would not want the commission to split their precincts but they don't want the city divided into multiple districts. He did suggest that any further annexations have to be contiguous.

Helo Hancock, Legislative Director for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe was next to testify. He explained that the district which the Coeur d'Alene Tribe is in now is a strange backwards C configuration and he understands that this will be changing. He explained that the major factor for the commission is maintaining communities of interest and that the Coeur d'Alene Tribe is a community of interest, and they would like to see it kept intact and joined with Kootenai County. He explained that the tribe has significant social, economic, historic, transportation, and cultural ties to Kootenai County. He also explained that if the reservation were combined with a county to the south, that would not be a community of interest. In response to a question from **Commissioner Andersen** regarding the reservation boundaries, **Mr. Hancock** advised that, while there isn't a fence, river or road that follows the boundaries, there are signs indicating that you are entering the reservation on South 95, that the west boundary is the Washington state line, that St. Maries is just off of the reservation and that to the south are the Benewah and Latah County lines. **Commissioner Andersen** asked if there are precincts along the boundary lines, and **Mr. Hancock** answered in the affirmative. He further indicated that the majority of the tribal community lives along the I95 corridor. **Chairman Frasure** asked about the Cataldo Mission being in Shoshone County, and **Mr. Hancock** clarified that the Mission is actually in Kootenai County.

Next to testify was **John Cross**, Region 1 Chairman of the Republican Party from Post Falls. He wanted to talk about reducing the legislative districts from 35 to 30, and wanted to recommend that the state maintain 35 districts. He indicated that larger legislative districts would make it harder for legislators to meet with their constituents. In answer to a question by **Commissioner Moses** about reducing government even if it means having larger legislative districts like California has, **Mr. Cross** stated that he didn't feel that reducing the districts by 5 would make much positive difference in the state budget and would hurt the representation of those in the rural areas. **Chairman Frasure** pointed out that going to thirty legislative districts would make the target population 54,000, and **Mr. Cross** indicated he would hate to see the districts get any bigger geographically than they already are.

Senator John Goedde then testified that he agreed with keeping the City of Coeur d'Alene whole. His opinion is that it makes no sense to draw lines along major highways, such as those that bisect Coeur d'Alene. He also advised the commission that reducing the number of legislative districts to 30 would not positively impact the state financially.

Next to testify was **Jeremy Boggess**, who lives in Coeur d'Alene and asked the commission to respect geography and county boundaries. He requested that if this is not possible to please respect cities and communities of interest, and don't be swayed by political interests. He also asked that the commissioners actually drive around and inspect the boundaries. **Commissioner Frasure** responded that they were indeed driving around and pointed out the great increase in public hearings that this commission is holding around the state compared to what the commission did ten years ago.

Ed Morse, a businessman and real estate appraiser from Coeur d'Alene was next to testify. He indicated that real estate values are driven by the economy in the area. He indicated that he has looked at some of the maps that have been submitted to the commission and was shocked to see that areas that have no commonality have been put together. He discussed that the areas along I95 have a commonality of interest. He expressed that he doesn't understand why it is important to keep Coeur d'Alene together at the expense of all of the other cities around it. He said that he can understand tribal concerns; however he feels that they have much more geographical similarity with the area to the south of them instead of Kootenai County, which would be a purely political connection. He indicated that he feels the question is how best to split larger population centers such as Post Falls which is growing faster than Coeur d'Alene and thinks the commission should make allowance for that. He asked that the commission look at what the communities of interest are, such as jobs, geography, schools, transportation, housing and shopping and to group the communities along the I95 together. **Commissioner Moses** said that politics are not a negative but rather are the way we organize society. He pointed out that Idaho doesn't have straight lines, and that much of it is rural, people live far apart, and that the commission must focus on its obligation to one person= one vote. He asked if **Mr. Morse** was suggesting that the commonality within the City of Coeur d'Alene was not strong enough to keep it together? **Mr. Morse** indicated that this was correct that he feels that eastern Kootenai County into Hayden, Dalton Gardens, Athol, and maybe Spirit Lake have more in common and should be in a district together. Also in regards to the congressional districts he feels that north Idaho should continue to be linked to SW Idaho and not with eastern Idaho. He also indicated that he did not feel that reducing the number of legislative districts would have much of an impact on the size of government; however it would have a negative impact on the quality of representation. **Commissioner Andersen** then asked for clarification if **Mr. Morse** was suggesting using I95 as a boundary for legislative district, by looking at a western

part of the county vs. the eastern part of the county. **Mr. Morse** indicated that was not what he was proposing as he has not looked at those numbers. 195 is major transportation corridor; he was suggesting taking segments along both sides of the corridor to use in redistricting. **Chairman Frasure** then asked if there was commonality between Post Falls and Rathdrum. **Mr. Morse** indicated there was a high degree of commonality as some people commute within those areas and they have some school districts in common. He then suggested that the commission look at school districts to find commonality of interests. He also mentioned that Shoshone County is shrinking because of a loss of employment base, whereas Kootenai County is growing every year, and suggested that growth trends are important for the commission to look at. **Mr. Morse** also indicated that St. Maries and Shoshone County have linkage as far as their natural resources and economic base, however as there are no roads from north to south they really aren't linked in any other way. He indicated that the reservation has more in common with St. Maries and Benewah County to the south to the Latah County line, because it's rural, it's agricultural, it's timber. **Chairman Frasure** then asked **Mr. Morse** to comment on the tribe's economic ties to Coeur d'Alene as that seemed compelling to him. **Mr. Morse** explained that as the tribe is not a public body its financial and economic information is not posted. He indicated that most of the economic impact is gaming revenue; however they also engage in farming and lumber to the south. He stated that many people that are attracted to gaming are from the Spokane area so not all of their impact comes out of Kootenai County.

Leah Southwell from Coeur d'Alene was next to testify. She urged the commission to remember the principles of a representative government. Our representatives are to be people that know us and understand us. People in eastern Idaho speak a different language and she does not agree with combining eastern Idaho and northern Idaho in a Congressional District. She also stated that she feels that the power sources in Idaho need to be broken up so that Boise does not take over the entire state. Please do not let Democrat or Republican strongholds affect your decisions. **Commissioner Moses** then pointed out that 40% of the population lives in the Boise area and asked how **Ms. Southwell** felt that should be broken up. **Ms. Southwell** did not have a solution for this but asked the commission to keep in mind how they could separate power as they go about their job. Sometimes centers of power can take over where not all are represented.

Chairman Frasure discussed the population changes and shifts in the state of Idaho over the last ten years, and the necessary changes in legislative districts this has caused. He explained that it is this Commission's goal to produce a plan that it can unanimously approve 6-0.

Commissioner Esposito then indicated that the reason that the commission has increased the number of public hearings is to obtain information from all areas of the state. He stated that they have heard from people across the state, who have given them great information. He indicated that there is an art to redistricting and that as art is in the eye of the beholder, the commission won't please everyone. He then repeated the request that everyone try to do 7 districts on the map and submit them so they can be considered.

Commissioner Frasure assured the audience that they are taking copious notes and the public input is critical to their process.

Dan Green, a Kootenai County Commissioner, stated that he had not planned to testify but now wanted to speak. He stated that the Coeur d'Alene tribe is a very good neighbor, has strong economic ties to the county, that they work well with them in several areas such as managing natural resources like Lake Coeur d'Alene and the Coeur d'Alene basin. He likes that they take the wealth from Spokane County and redistributes it in Idaho, and he encouraged the commission to keep the reservation in the same district as Kootenai County.

Next to testify was **Jeff Wor** from Post Falls. He stated that he thinks it is important to keep 35 legislative districts, as by lowering the number he believes representation would be decreased. He also stated that regarding congressional districts he thinks the arrangement as it is will work with just the line moved a little further west. He also requested that the commission look beyond cities as communities of interest and consider some ideas such as school districts, and economic and recreational zones. He also suggested splitting the city of Coeur d'Alene. **Commissioner Kane** noted the conflicting statutory requirements they operate under, and asked if he was suggesting they consider where people "hang out." **Mr. Wor** stated that it is a very different world from fifty years ago and they should look beyond the usual ideas of what constitutes a community of interest.

Larry Yergler, a Shoshone County Commissioner, was next called to testify. He suggested that their county is more similar economically and has more ties with Benewah County than Kootenai County. He expressed the wish that each county could have a representative, and **Commissioner Moses** explained that this was prohibited by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Next called was **Joanna Adams** who currently lives in Coeur d'Alene. She suggested that the commission consider maintaining 35 districts and consider reducing the number of representatives to one in each district. She indicated that this would save money that could provide more funding for education in Idaho. **Commissioner Kane** advised her that this was an intriguing suggestion; however, the Idaho Constitution Art III, sec. 2, states that it is the legislature that decides whether there will be one or two representatives in each district, not the Redistricting Commission.

Kristy Johnson from Post Falls was next to testify and indicated that she has drawn maps, based on drainage basins, which she is submitting, down to Gem and Valley Counties. She states that it is possible to keep Coeur d'Alene in one piece and to keep the tribe in one

piece. She feels that her maps address the concerns of everyone that has testified tonight. Also she supports the congressional district submitted by Steve Walker because it allows the state of Ada to have its own district, and this plan keeps 90% of the Hispanic population in one district and 90% of the Native American population in the other district.

Next to address the commission was **David Olson** from St. Maries, who was representing himself. He explained that the Coeur d'Alene tribe is a major economic power in this area of the state, as is the city of Coeur d'Alene. He suggested that by combining the two the commission would be creating a giant that would overwhelm all the less-populated counties in the area, the way Boise does. He also stated that he would like to find a way to break the Congressional Districts in a north/south pattern which would make Congressional campaigning easier for independent candidates, like tea party candidates.

Dean Haagenson from Hayden, and a former redistricting commissioner, then discussed the prior commission and said that no one liked legislative district 2 and the Supreme Court forced them into it. **Mr. Haagenson** went over the guidelines which this commission must follow. He indicated that many of the guidelines are contradictory on their face and that the commission will have to weigh what is best for the representation of the people.

Chairman Frasure announced the meetings in Moscow and Lewiston the following day, and adjourned the meeting.